

The President's Daily Brief

22 March 1973

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~~*Top Secret*~~

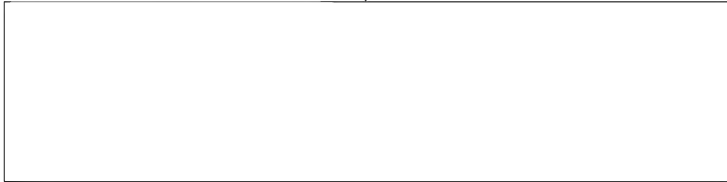
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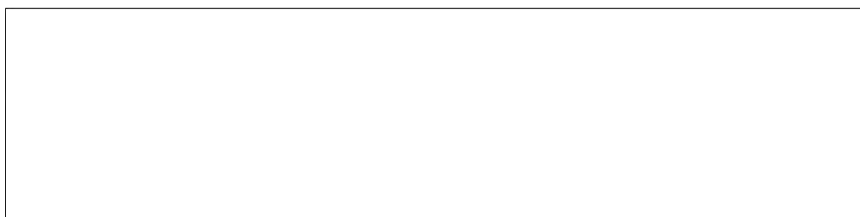
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

22 March 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Brezhnev will visit Bonn in May--the first such trip by a top Soviet official. (Page 1)

In Vietnam, 17 small infiltration groups, mostly composed of civilian administrators, have been noted entering the pipeline in the past two days--the first since March 4. (Page 2)

Cambodian Government moves against prominent opposition leaders are adding to mounting tensions in Phnom Penh. (Page 3)

Sadat is reported to have fired Prime Minister Sidqi and charged his adviser Hafiz Ismail with forming a new cabinet. (Page 4)

Sudanese President Numayri is increasingly suspicious that Qadhafi planned the Black September operation in Khartoum. (Page 5)

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USSR - WEST GERMANY

Brezhnev will visit West Germany in May, according to Bonn's Foreign Office, in the first such trip by a top Soviet official. Moscow has underscored the importance of the occasion by indicating that he will not stop in East Berlin or any other European capitals.

The West Germans plan to treat the occasion as a full state visit and expect it to last some five days. It will include side trips to other West German cities. The precise dates must still be ironed out.

Brezhnev and Brandt appear to have established a good rapport when they met in the Crimea in 1971. Their coming discussions will range over Europe-wide topics such as the CSCE, MBFR, and the future course of Brandt's Ostpolitik as well as more immediate bilateral issues.

Continuing differences over how to refer to the status of Berlin are bound to arise in connection with any agreements on cultural and scientific-technical exchanges or economic cooperation. The Germans hope that, by raising this subject at the highest level, they can persuade the Soviets to go further in acknowledging links between West Berlin and West Germany.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Seventeen small infiltration groups, whose total strength is probably less than 500, have been noted entering the pipeline at Vinh in North Vietnam in the past two days. The infiltrators in these groups are primarily civilian administrators.

Over 2,000 military and civilian administrators have now been identified entering the system since the cease-fire. This amounts to at least a fifth of the infiltrators of all categories who are estimated to have started south in this period--an unprecedentedly high proportion. Prisoner reports suggest that some of them may be South Vietnamese who are returning after several years of training in the North.

This is the first time since March 4 that southbound groups have been noted in messages from this area.

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CAMBODIA

A government spokesman today tried to dispel reports that Republican Party head Sirik Matak is under house arrest, but in effect confirmed that he is being held incommunicado. [redacted] President Lon Nol is thinking of sending him out of the country.

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[redacted] Lon Nol told a key Republican official on Tuesday that he and other party leaders would be arrested unless they "purified" themselves by resigning. The President added that it was inappropriate to belong to a party headed by a "prince"--Matak.

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The move against Matak probably stems from recent rumors associating him with royalist plotting against the government. Matak's long-time foe, Brigadier General Lon Non, is the most likely source of such allegations.

[redacted] the government has arrested former Democratic Party chief In Tam, although the government spokesman states that no special security measures have been taken in his regard. In Tam finished a respectable second in the presidential election last summer, and has strongly advocated reconciliation with the Khmer insurgents.

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Important figures in the government will be increasingly apprehensive about their own positions. This will be especially true of General Fernandez, the army chief of staff. Fernandez ranks high on Lon Non's list of political enemies.

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EGYPT

Hafiz Ismail, presidential adviser, is forming a new cabinet following the resignation of Prime Minister Sidqi on March 15 [redacted] Sidqi is reported to have resigned at President Sadat's request. The government reorganization may be announced early next week.

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Sadat may believe that removal of Sidqi-- who is disliked by many Egyptians--will help heal some of the divisions troubling the government. Sadat's decision may also have been influenced by fear that his own position was threatened by the ambitious prime minister.

Hafiz Ismail is a trusted lieutenant of Sadat and a logical choice for prime minister. His appointment would seem to confirm Sadat's continued interest in political efforts to resolve the dispute with Israel.

The new government, however, may be presented to the country as a "war cabinet" in order to underscore Sadat's commitment to regain the occupied territory.

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SUDAN

[redacted] President Numayri has received numerous messages on behalf of the eight Black September terrorists from most Arab governments, including Egypt. The conspicuous absence of such a message from Libya has fed Numayri's suspicion that Qadhafi planned the Khartoum operation.

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In an interview last week, Numayri referred repeatedly to "another Arab state" as "one of Black September's planners and financiers" which was responsible for selecting Khartoum as the site for the capture and murder of diplomats. Several Sudanese suspected of Libyan sympathies have been arrested.

Meanwhile, earlier this week Sudan and the fedayeen agreed to halt their propaganda war. For public consumption, the Sudanese accepted the Palestinian Liberation Organization's denial of complicity in the murders and Yasir Arafat's promise to investigate the affair.

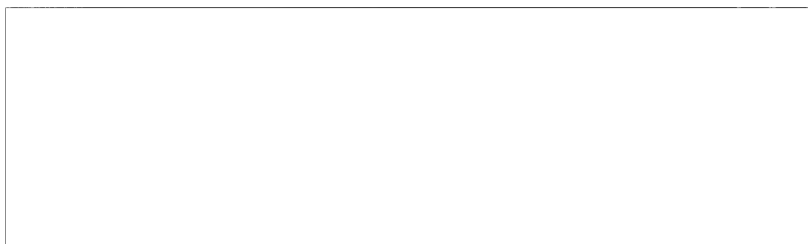
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Whether Numayri has agreed not to execute the terrorists remains unclear. [redacted] their trial will not begin until late April, after Numayri returns from visits to Eastern and Western Europe.

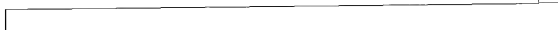
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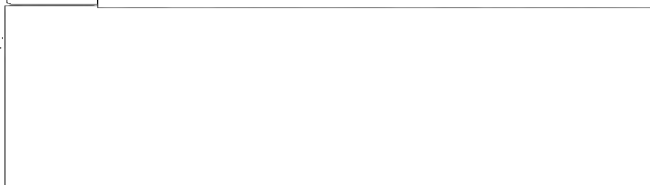
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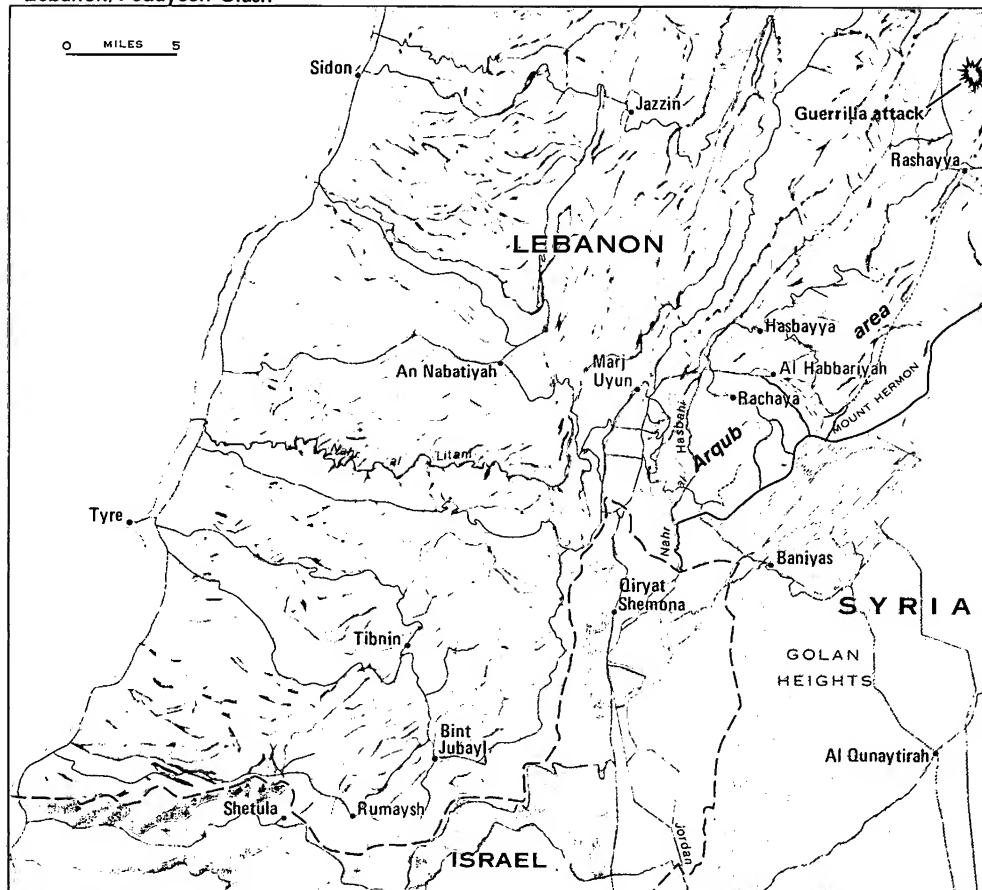


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Lebanon/Fedayeen Clash



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NOTES

Lebanon-Fedayeen: A fedayeen attack on a government checkpoint in the southeast yesterday resulted in two Lebanese deaths. The incident confirms reports of some recent guerrilla reinfiltration, which may have indicated preparations for a raid into Israel in retaliation for Israel's strikes against fedayeen bases in northern Lebanon last month. Recently intensified army patrols could have triggered yesterday's clash.

Uruguay: Key generals, displeased with President Bordaberry's failure to implement the military's plans to deal with the deteriorating economy, apparently have decided that the President must resign. They have not yet agreed on a successor, who in any event will carry out the military's directives. The removal of Bordaberry would strip away the last facade of civilian authority in the Uruguayan Government.

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